

On the Reserve

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Anna Asenath Hawley
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WHAT a depth of meaning lies beneath the words Indian Work is known and known only to those who have had actual experience in the field.

It is hoped, dear reader, that you are interested in the Indian. We Canadians should have an especial interest in the aborigines of our country, since to them we are very deeply indebted. Who is there, whose heart has not been touched by those lines of that true Canadian poetess, the late Emily Pauline Johnson?

They but forget we Indians owned the land

From ocean unto ocean; that they stand

Upon a soil that centuries ago
Was our sole Kingdom and our right alone.

They never think how they would feel to-day,

If some great nation came from far away,

Wresting their country from their hapless braves,

Giving what they gave us—but wars and graves—

Though starved, crushed, plundered, lies our nation low—

Perhaps the white man's God has willed it so.



Indian Encampment

The Indian has watched the onward march of the white man taking possession of the lordly estates over which for generations he had roamed as King of forest and river and plain. Our coming has meant to him the loss of that which is dear to the heart of every human being of every nation and color and tongue. It has meant the loss of dignity, of power and of freedom.

That the original inhabitants of our country should have first claim upon the ministrations of the Church, is a recognized and an acknowledged fact. It was the Indian who called the Church to the New World—it was to the Indian the Church first came to Saskatchewan—his place should never be usurped.

It is well known that those who have heard, and obeyed the Master's call to service to our Red brethren, dwell not in marble halls, nor tread a path with roses strewn.

To set forth the discouragements of Indian work is not my purpose, but rather to endeavor to give my readers a glimpse of some of the encouragements which have been experienced on one reservation in northern Saskatchewan. Before taking up the work I had occasionally read about the Indians and had seen pictures of them, but once only had the opportunity been mine to listen to one who had had actual experience in the field.

One Sunday morning at St. Luke's, Ottawa, I listened to that zealous apostle to the Red men, the Bishop of Keewatin, who vividly brought before his hearers the great need of more workers among our aborigines—and as he eloquently extolled in that earnest, impressive manner which we who have heard him, know the faithfulness and devotion of the Christian Indian, his simple, childlike faith, trust, and obedience to the commands of the Kechemun-e-to or C at Spirit, surely many hearts were touched. One, at least, in the congregation resolved that should

the way be opened, she would go out to her dusky brothers and sisters.

The Department of Indian Affairs, after correspondence with the Bishop of Saskatchewan, sent me to minister to the needs of a band of 200 Crees, on the James Smith Reserve, about fifty miles northeast of the city of Prince Albert.

A graduate nurse would be a God-send to this people wrote the Agent, the band is weak physically, and tuberculosis in various forms has a strong hold upon it.

With instructions to act in the dual capacity of teacher and nurse my face was turned westward and northward. After a long journey I found myself far

from the madding crowd, far from the hustle and bustle of the work a day world. My dream was realized. I had reached the reservation with its 40,000 acres of open prairie, deep, dense woodland, sloughs, lakelets and streams. I was in the land of the Indian. Before, behind, on either side lay great green stretches of rolling prairie, generously dotted with pretty bluffs, which were in the very act of exchanging their



Types at the Indian School

rich green gowns for those of pale yellow, crimson, gold and brown. And nestling here and there in the foliage a tepee, tent, or little whitewashed cabin and an occasional camp-fire, sending upward a column of blue grey smoke. Away to the north, lay the great pine forest, dark and still; to the left the broad Saskatchewan fed by the meeting snows of the famous Rockies, flowed majestically onward, hedged on either side by low reaches of greenery poplar and willow and tall majestic pines like so many sentinels, guarding and maintaining the beauty of one of the prettiest rivers. Over all there was a glorious sunset—a gorgeous background of crimson and gold.

And evening lingers in the West

More beautiful than dreams,
Which whispers of the Spirit-Land
Its wilderness and streams.

When for the first time looking out upon it all, the language of my soul was like unto that of Robert Service.

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